MOBBING AMONG ADOLESCENTS: SOCIAL CAUSES, FORMS AND INTENSITY, FAMILY SITUATION, AND PARENTING PRACTICES

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Abstract: This study focuses on the phenomenon of mobbing among adolescents aged 15 to 16, analyzing its social causes, forms, and intensity of manifestation, as well as family situation and opinions regarding adolescent education and parenting practices. The aim of the research is to develop a model for approaching mobbing and to analyze the results obtained. The study examined the manipulated variables and basic statistical indicators that characterize these variables in the research sample, and the results showed that most students live with both parents and consider their household's financial situation to be similar to that of their friends and classmates. Overall, mobbing represents an important social problem among adolescents and can have significant negative effects on the mental and physical health of its victims. By identifying the causes of mobbing behaviors, this information can be used to develop effective prevention programs in the school environment.

Keywords: mobbing, adolescents, social causes, family situation, parenting practices, statistical indicators, social problem, negative effects, mental health, physical health, victims, behaviors, prevention, school environment.

Introduction

Mobbing is a very serious phenomenon that can have serious consequences for adolescents. Adolescents aged 15 to 16 are in a critical period of emotional and social development, and mobbing can negatively affect these processes. Harassment, verbal or physical violence, social ostracism, and intimidation are all forms of abusive behavior that can be encountered in the adolescent environment. Such behavior can lead to decreased self-confidence, anxiety, depression, and even social isolation [6, 11].

Adolescents who suffer from mobbing may have difficulty building healthy and lasting relationships, which can negatively affect their quality of life. It is important for parents, educators, and authorities to

be aware of this phenomenon and to take measures to prevent and intervene in cases of mobbing. It is important to promote a culture of respect and tolerance in schools and in the community at large so that adolescents can learn to communicate and interact with each other in a healthy and positive way. It is also important for adolescents to understand that it is not their fault when they are victims of mobbing and that it is important to seek help from trusted adults to cope with this difficult situation [5, 9].

Studies show that gender is an important factor when it comes to mobbing among adolescents. Thus, girls are twice as likely to be victims of this phenomenon than boys. This difference can be attributed to several factors, such as the social roles assigned to each gender or gender stereotypes that can be used as pretexts for harassment. Additionally, socioeconomic status and geographic region also play an important role in exposure to mobbing. Young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and rural areas are more vulnerable to harassment because they may be more socially isolated and less prepared to handle conflict situations. Moreover, different cultures and values can influence how young people perceive and manage abusive behaviors, as well as their level of tolerance towards them. Regardless of the specific factors that may influence the incidence of mobbing, it is important for parents, educators, and authorities to be aware of this phenomenon and take measures to prevent and combat abusive behavior among adolescents. By educating young people about the importance of respect, tolerance, and empathy, we can contribute to creating a safer and more harmonious environment for all young people [8].

According to a study conducted in Sweden, high school students are to some extent exposed to mobbing, experiencing abusive behavior within their learning environment. This study showed that approximately 6% of students were subjected to mobbing at least once a week, and 2% were victims of mobbing on a daily basis [3].

Meanwhile, in the United States, another study showed that nearly one-third of high school students reported being subjected to mobbing in the past 12 months. These alarming figures highlight the widespread nature of the mobbing problem in schools and underscore the importance of addressing this issue through preventive and intervention measures. It is important for education in schools to be supplemented with socio-emotional education programs and programs to prevent and combat mobbing, to help students learn to communicate

and manage difficult situations in a constructive and healthy way [2].

Mobbing is a social problem that can have a significant impact on its victims, including their mental and physical health. People who are bullied can experience stress, anxiety, depression, sleep problems, concentration and learning difficulties, relationship problems, and may even develop personality disorders or other more serious mental health problems. To prevent and address mobbing, it is important for parents, educators, and the community to be aware of this issue and take appropriate action. Firstly, it is important for adults to encourage students to communicate and discuss any problems or discomfort they encounter in school or social environments.

There should also be socio-emotional education programs in schools that help students understand and manage emotions, develop communication skills, and learn to engage in healthy and respectful relationships with others. In addition, it is important for schools to include mobbing prevention and intervention programs that teach students to recognize and report abusive behaviors and understand the negative consequences of these actions [4].

If cases of mobbing are observed, it is important for adults to take appropriate intervention measures, such as individual or group counseling, changing the learning environment, or disciplinary sanctions, depending on the situation [7].

In conclusion, it is important to raise awareness of and address the issue of mobbing among adolescents to ensure a healthy and respectful learning and social environment for all young people.

Results and Discussions
In continuation of the research, the phenomenon of mobbing was addressed, and the results showed that 13% of respondents were subjected to this phenomenon in the last academic year, suggesting a significant prevalence of mobbing among adolescents. Additionally, it was found that girls are more exposed to mobbing than boys, and that this phenomenon is more widespread in the school environment than outside of it.

Furthermore, the quality of the family environment and parental practices were analyzed, and it was found that they have a significant influence on adolescent exposure to mobbing. Adolescents who come from dysfunctional family backgrounds or have parents with authoritarian parenting practices are more susceptible to mobbing.

These results highlight the importance of the role of parents and family education in preventing and treating the phenomenon of mobbing among adolescents. It is important for parents to pay special attention to their children's socio-emotional education, promote positive relationships in the family, and encourage communication and the development of social and emotional skills in their children. Additionally, school education should include programs to prevent mobbing and develop the socio-emotional skills of students.

To analyze the phenomenon of mobbing in the adolescent group, we began with a quantitative and qualitative study based on information obtained through a questionnaire. Although the primary objective of the doctoral research is to describe the phenomenon of mobbing, including its social causes, forms, and intensity of manifestation among adolescents, we considered it necessary to include items that address the family situation (such as the type and size of the household and consumer needs satisfaction), the quality of the family environment, opinions on adolescent education, and parental practices [10].

This decision was motivated by the need to analyze mobbing and the causes of this negative phenomenon in relation to as many factors as possible that can contribute to or affect the life trajectory and socialization of adolescents.

In the first phase of the research, we examined the distribution of the manipulated variables and several basic statistical indicators that generally characterize these variables in the research sample (e.g., mean, minimum and maximum values, standard deviation).

We also checked whether the variable distributions meet the criteria of data normality and, if not, planned to use tests for non-parametric data.

In the initial stage of our survey, we focused on investigating the profile of the families from which the participating adolescents come. In this regard, we analyzed household structures and found that the average number of children per family is 1.68, a figure similar to the general population average. The modal and median values are 1. The minimum number of children per household in the studied population is 1, and the maximum number is 6.

From a percentage perspective, 50% of households in our sample have one child, 38.9% have two children, 7.1% have three children, and 4% have more than four children.

The average age of the students who completed our questionnaire is 16.3 years. Most students reported living with both parents (72.7%). For those who do not live with both parents, we obtained the following data (Table 1):

- 11% are in the care of a single parent due to their divorce/separation (8.6% are in the care of the mother, and 2.4% are in the care of the father);

- 5.4% live with their mother, while their father works abroad; 2.8% live with someone else (grandparents, relatives, other adults), while both parents work abroad, and 2.5% live with their father while their mother works abroad;

- 2.4% are in the care of a single parent due to the death of the other parent;

- 3.2% claim to live with someone else (related or unrelated persons) for various reasons.

Table 1. Demographic and social statistics of students and their families

Item (Statistics)	Value
Average number of children per family	1.68
Mode of number of children per family	1
Median of number of children per family	1
Minimum number of children per household	1
Maximum number of children per household	6
Percentage of households with 1 child	50%
Percentage of households with 2 children	38.9%
Percentage of households with 3 children	7.1%
Percentage of households with more than 4 children	4%
Average age of students who completed the questionnaire	16.3 years
Percentage of students living with both parents	72.7%
Percentage of students living with one parent due to divorce/separation	11%
Percentage of students living with their mother, while their father	5.4%

Item (Statistics)	Value
works abroad	
Percentage of students living with someone else (grandparents, relatives, other adults) while both parents work abroad	2.8%
Percentage of students living with their father, while their mother works abroad	2.5%
Percentage of students living with one parent due to the death of the other parent	2.4%
Percentage of students living with someone else (related or unrelated persons) for various reasons	3.2%
Percentage of households with children aged 15-16 facing migration abroad	11%
Percentage of households with children aged 15-16 facing migration abroad affecting only one parent	8%
Percentage of households with children aged 15-16 facing migration abroad affecting both parents	3%

It should be noted that approximately 11% of households with children aged between 15 and 16 are facing migration abroad, affecting in almost 8% of cases a single parent, and in approximately 3% of cases, both parents.

Figure 1 shows that the majority of students (approximately 85%) consider their household's financial situation to be similar to that of their friends and peers.

When analyzing socio-demographic variables, we observed that male students are significantly more likely to consider their family's financial situation to be better than those around them, compared to other respondents of their age ($\chi2(2) = 11.34$, $p < .05$).
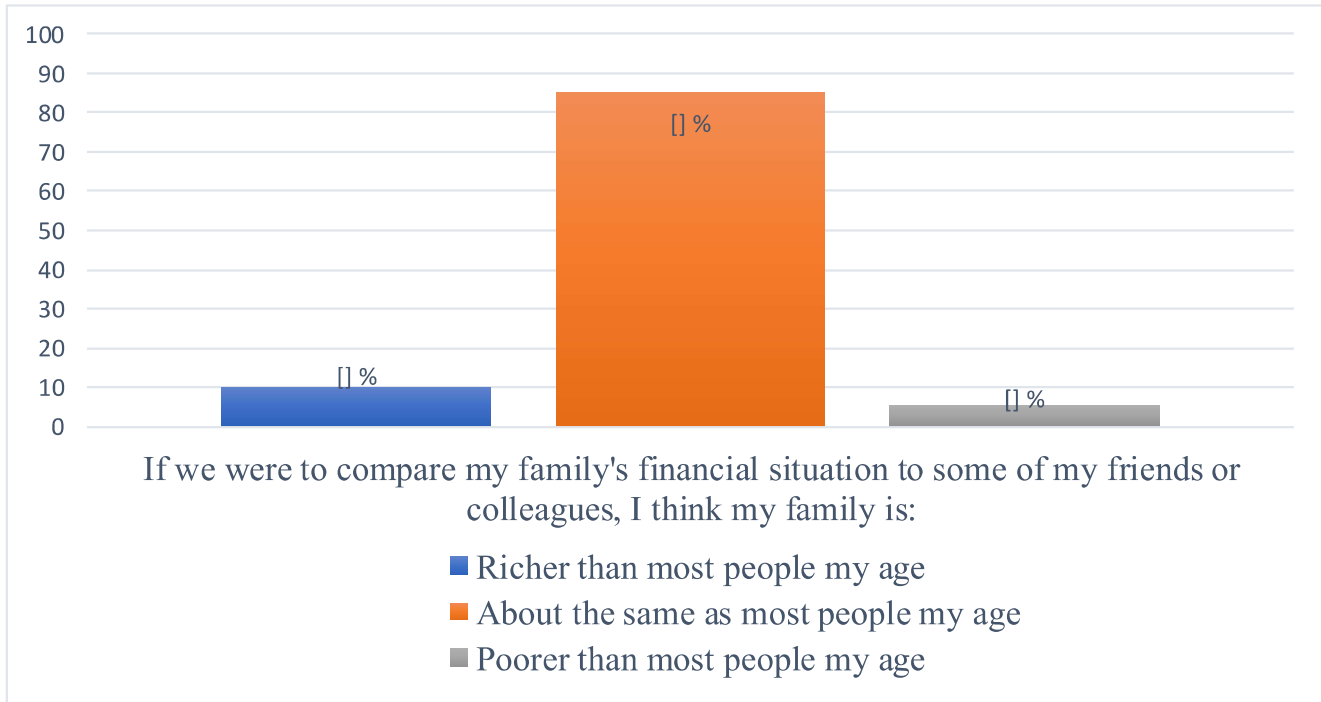
Fig. 1. The financial situation of the family compared to that of friends/colleagues

Regarding the relationship with their parents, it can be observed that the majority of students (91.8%) have a good or very good relationship with them (Figure 2). When analyzing the demographic variables, no significant differences are observed between the residence area or the gender of the students who answered the questionnaire. In other words, students from rural and urban areas describe their relationship with their parents similarly, as do girls and boys.

However, if we take into account the age of the students, it can be observed that older students describe this relationship as very good to a significantly greater extent: $\chi2$ (4) = 48.79, p < .01).
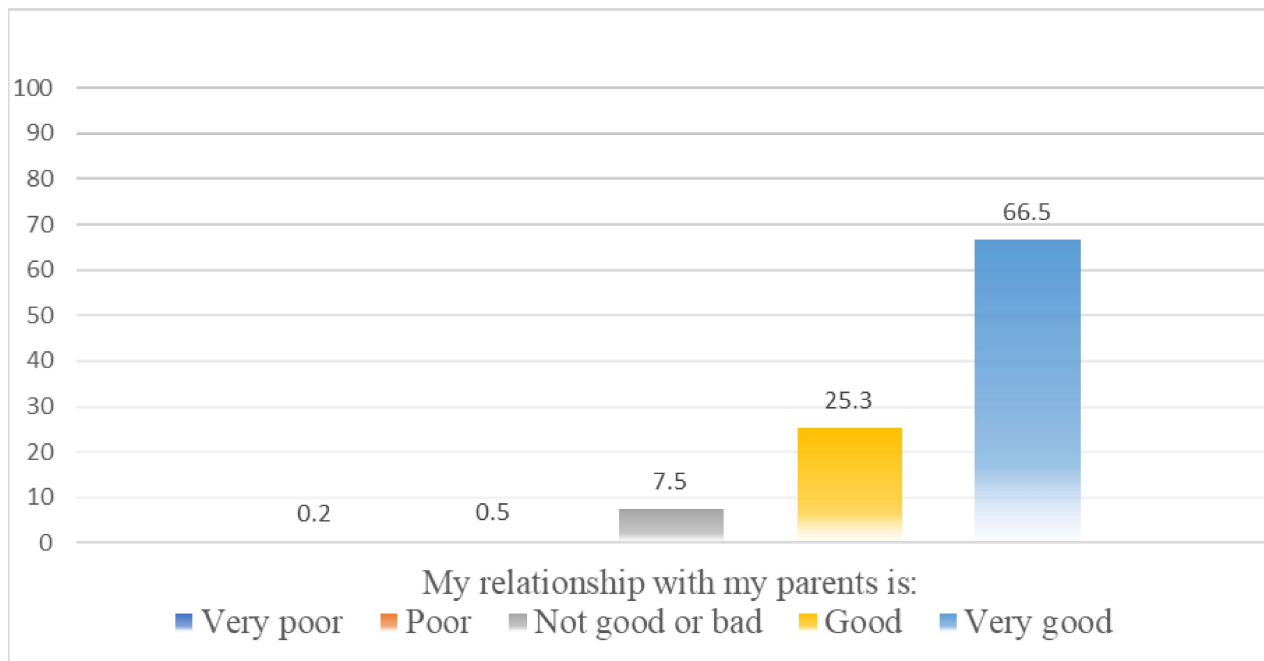
Fig. 2. Students' relationship with their parents (in %)

In regards to family activities and ways of spending time together (Figure 3), the majority of students report that their mother is the one who listens to them when they have problems or helps them with their homework (if there is someone who helps them). There is a difference in the importance attributed to people in their immediate social environment. In fact, the results suggest that students want to identify with their peer group. When they need help and support, students prioritize their mother first, followed by their father. The relationship with other significant adults is less intense than with parents.
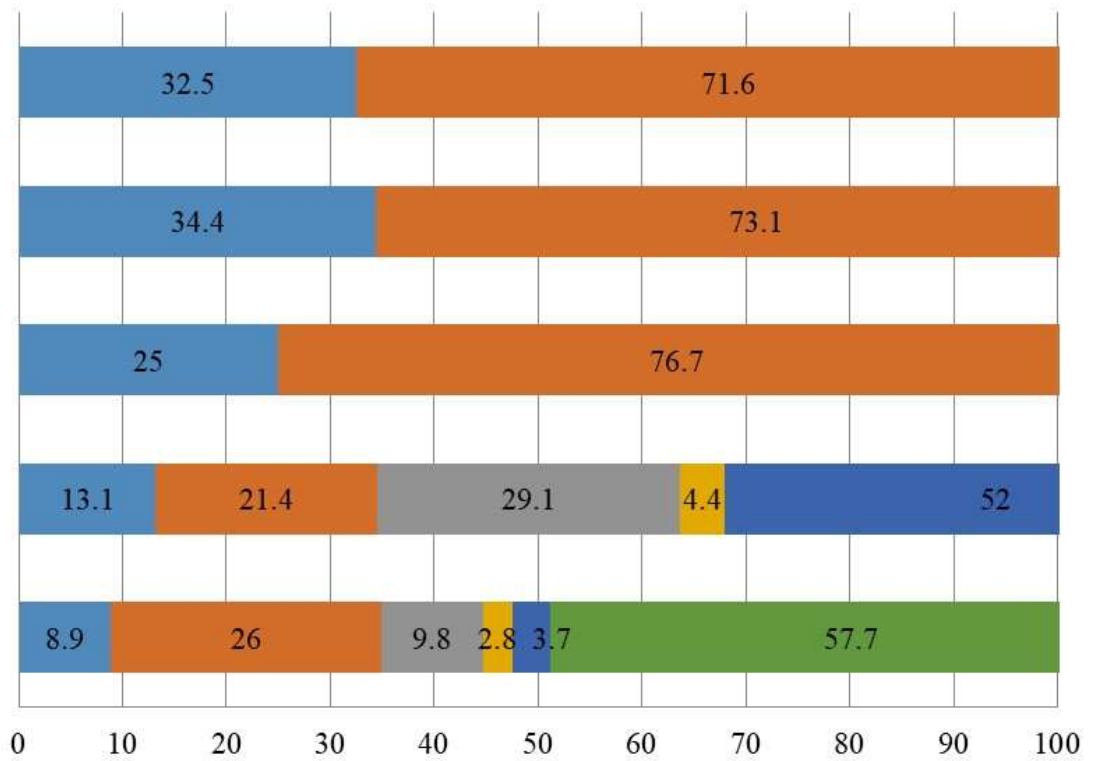
	Who helps me with my homework?	Who do I spend the most free time with?	Who comforts me?	Who listens to me and helps me when I have a problem?	Who do I feel closest to emotionally?
■ Dad	8.9	13.1	25	34.4	32.5
■ Mom	26	21.4	76.7	73.1	71.6
■ Siblings	9.8	29.1	9.2	11.4	19.2
■ Grandparents	2.8	4.4	14	11.2	11.7
■ Someone else	3.7	52	9.7	11.9	8.5
■ No one	57.7	3.8	5.7	2.2	2

Fig. 3. Ways of spending time with family (cumulative percentages)

It is worth noting that almost 58% of the students do not receive any help from anyone when preparing their homework. Additionally, it can be observed that the involvement of grandparents and other family members is limited. There is a statistically significant difference between the role of the mother, father, and other family members in their involvement in the students' homework preparation: $\chi2$ (5) =121.10, p < .01.
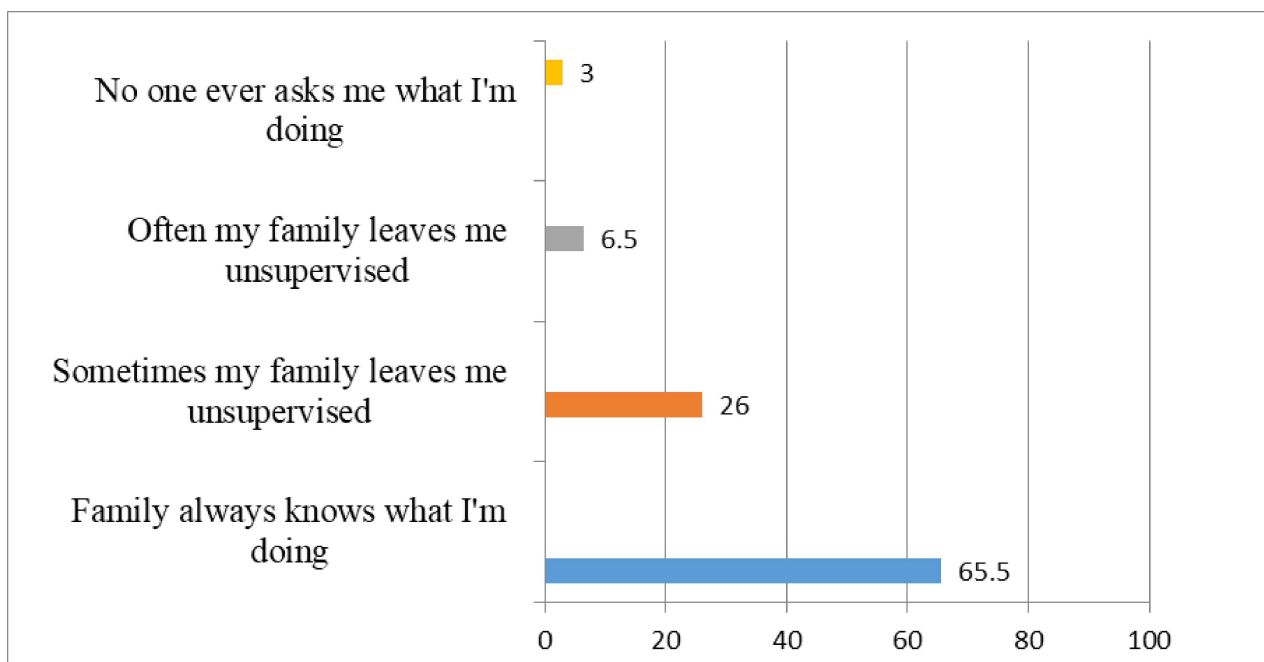
How monitored do you feel by your family?

Fig. 4. Monitoring of students by family

65.5% of students reported feeling supervised by their families all the time, while 26% stated they are sometimes left unsupervised, and 6.5% are often in this situation, according to the data from Figure 4. This suggests that there are more unsupervised students than those affected by parental migration.

Regarding gender differences, girls significantly report more than boys that they are supervised by their families ($\chi 2(3) = 38.36$, $p < 0.01$).

Moreover, students from rural areas report to a greater extent than those from urban areas that they are sometimes left unsupervised by their families or that no one ever asks them what they are doing ($\chi 2(3) = 20.40$, $p < 0.01$) [1].

Conclusions
The study's "Results and Discussions" section commenced with an analysis of the mobbing phenomenon among teenagers, which involved a quantitative and qualitative investigation through a questionnaire. The study found that 13% of respondents were subjected to mobbing in the last school year, suggesting a significant prevalence of this phenomenon among adolescents. The study also found that girls are more exposed to mobbing than boys, and this phenomenon is more widespread in the school environment than outside it. Additionally, the study analyzed the quality of the family environment and parental

practices and found that these have a significant influence on adolescents' exposure to mobbing. Adolescents from dysfunctional family environments or those with authoritarian parental practices are more exposed to mobbing.

The results highlight the importance of the role of parents and family education in preventing and treating mobbing among teenagers. Parents should pay special attention to their children's socio-emotional education, promote positive relationships in the family, and encourage communication and the development of social and emotional skills in their children. School education should also include programs for preventing mobbing and developing students' socio-emotional skills.

Regarding the methodology, the study used a questionnaire to collect data from a sample of teenagers. The study also analyzed the distribution of variables and some basic statistical indicators characterizing these variables in the research sample. The study checked whether the variable distributions meet the normality criteria and, if not, planned to use non-parametric tests.

The study also examined the profile of the families from which the participating teenagers come and analyzed the structure of households, finding that the average number of children per family is 1.68, similar to the general population's average. The study found that 50% of households in the sample have one child, 38.9% have two children, 7.1% have three children, and 4% have more than four children. The study concludes that the findings provide insights into the factors contributing to mobbing among teenagers and emphasize the importance of prevention efforts.

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